AFTERSHOCK™
JUSTIN JORDAN • JUAN GEDEON
#2
STRAYER™
GED EON 2015
Bonvillain
TAMRA BONVILLAIN • RACHEL DEERING

STRAYER 2

JUSTIN JORDAN creator & writer JUAN GEDEON artist
TAMRA BONVILLAIN colorist RACHEL DEERING letterer
JUAN GEDEON w/ TAMRA BONVILLAIN cover ALEXIS ZIRITT variant cover
JARED K. FLETCHER logo designer JOHN J. HILL book designer
MIKE MARTS editor

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AfterShock Trade Dress and Interior Design by JOHN J. HILL • AfterShock Logo Design by COMICRAFT
Publicity: contact AARON MARION (aaron@fifteenminutes.com) & RYAN CROY (ryan@fifteenminutes.com) at 15 MINUTES

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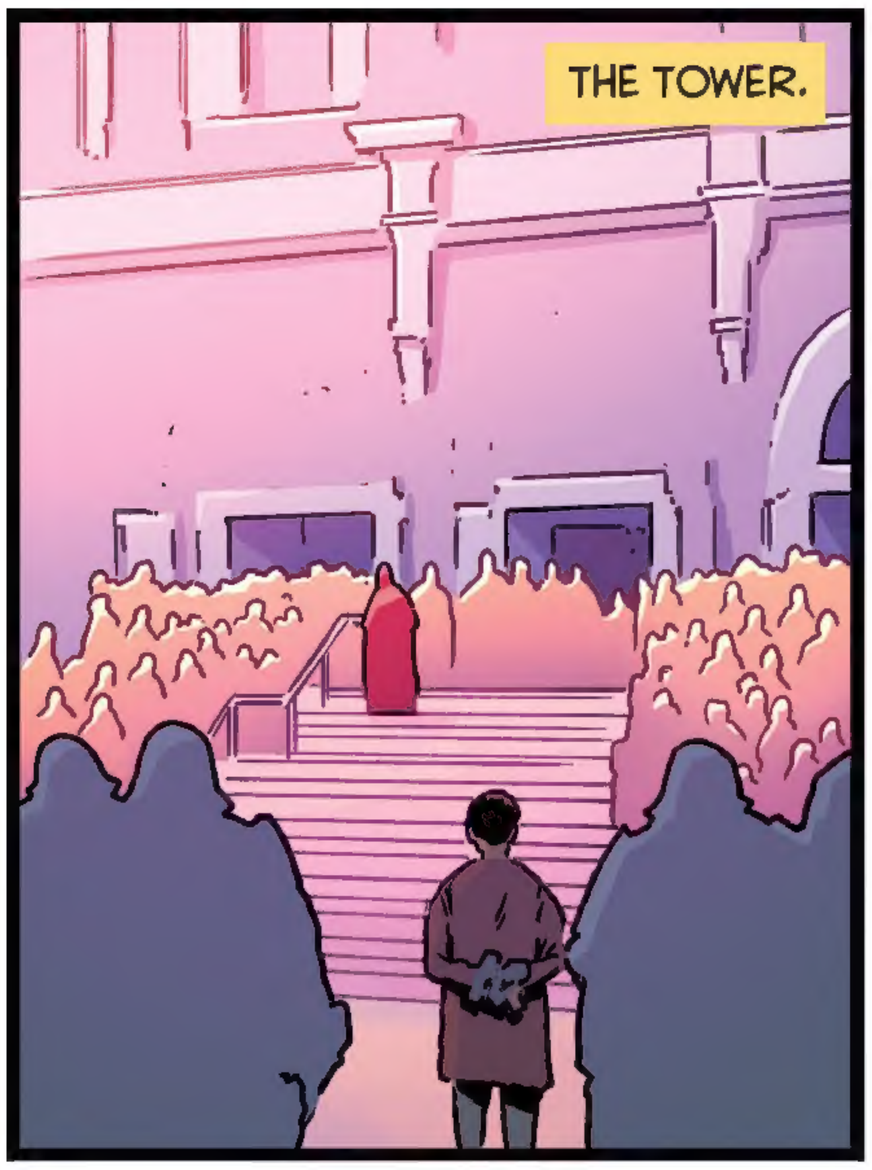
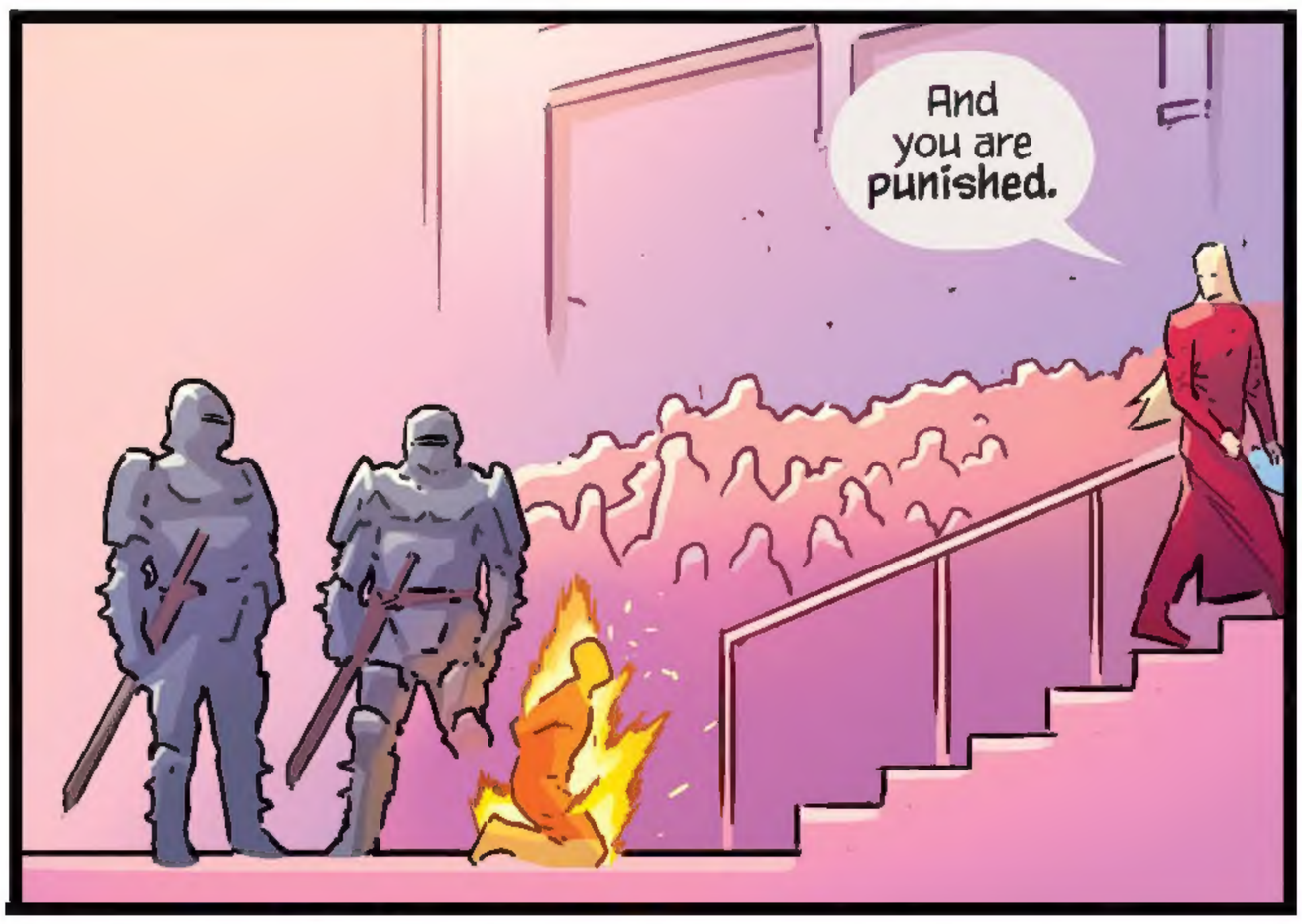
THE FIRST CITY.

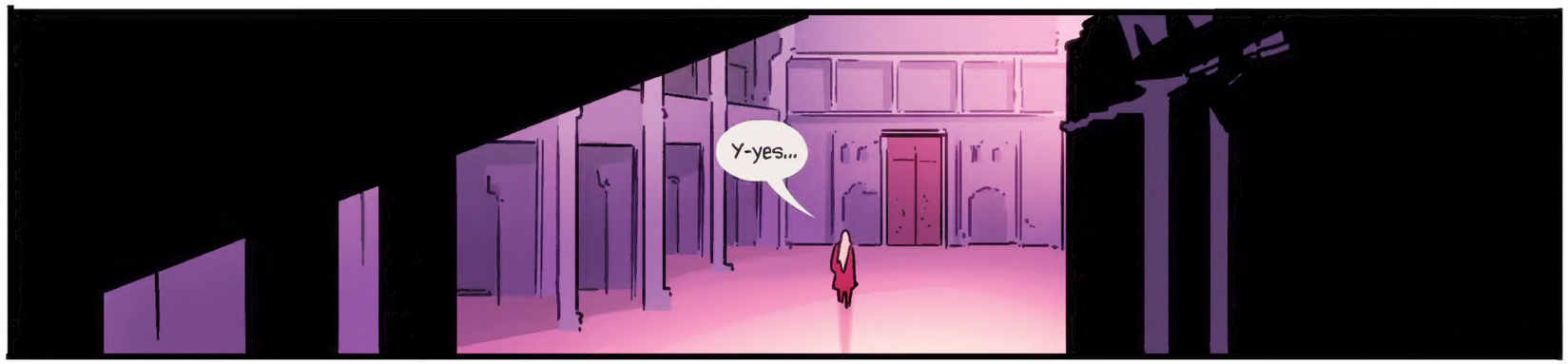

THE TOWER.

You have no right. No right...
Perhaps.

But I do have the power. You are guilty of **metaltheft.** The Emergent knows.


And you are **punished.**

YOU ARE REQUIRED.

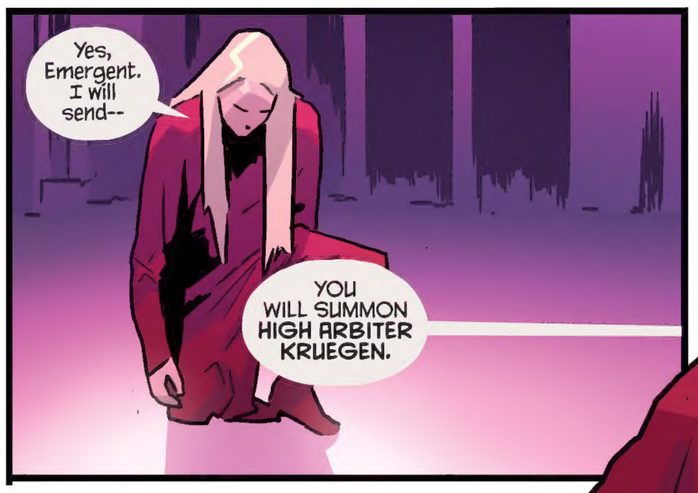

Y-yes...

...you know, I do not think...

...that was strictly **necessary.** I was on my way here.
I DO NOT CARE. AN **ARCHEMANCER** HAS BEEN FOUND.
I-I believed they were all **dead.** At some great effort, I might add.

YOU WERE **MISTAKEN.** YOU WILL CORRECT THIS.

I--
YOU WILL **CORRECT** THIS.

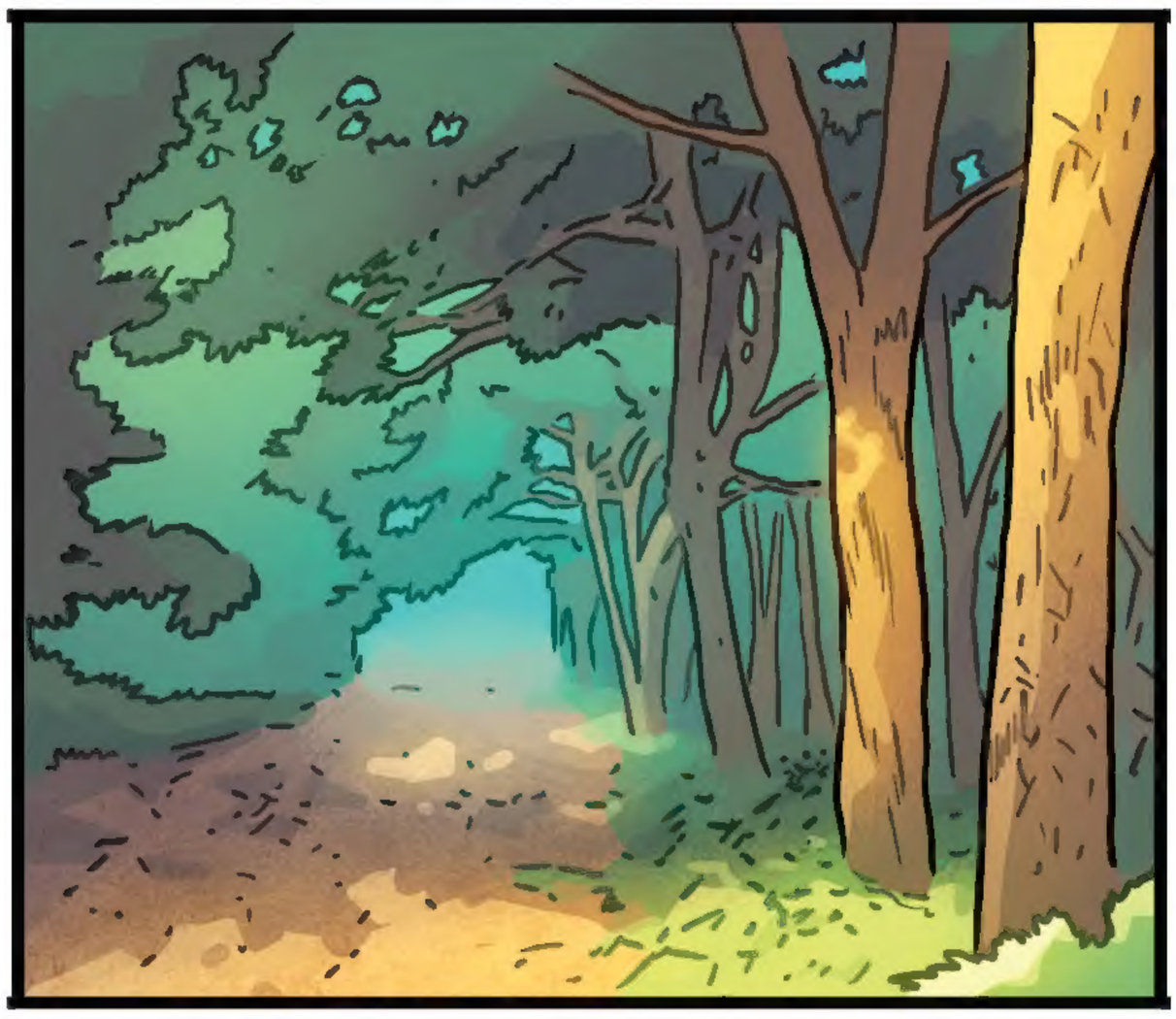

Yes, Emergent. I will send--
YOU WILL SUMMON **HIGH ARBITER KRUEGEN.**

He's not High Arbiter, anymore. He's a **farmer.** Not a very good one, I am told.
HIS RETIREMENT WAS CONTINGENT UPON COMPLETION OF HIS **TASK.** THAT HAS NOT OCCURRED.
KRUEGEN WILL **COMPLETE** THIS TASK.

Cryler!

Where are you, you stupid thing?

Cryler?



Bloody stupid sleps...

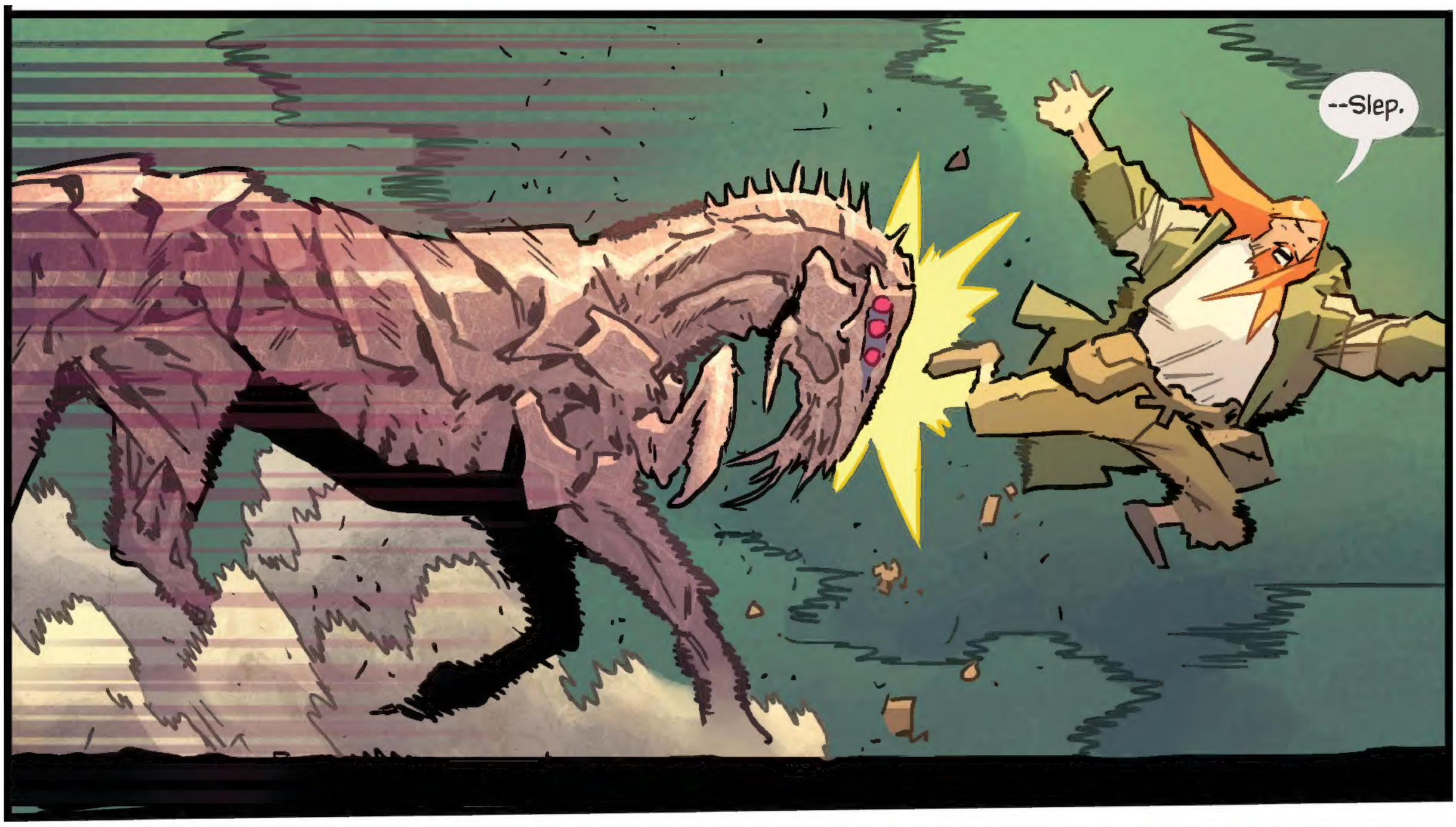
!
Er, hello.

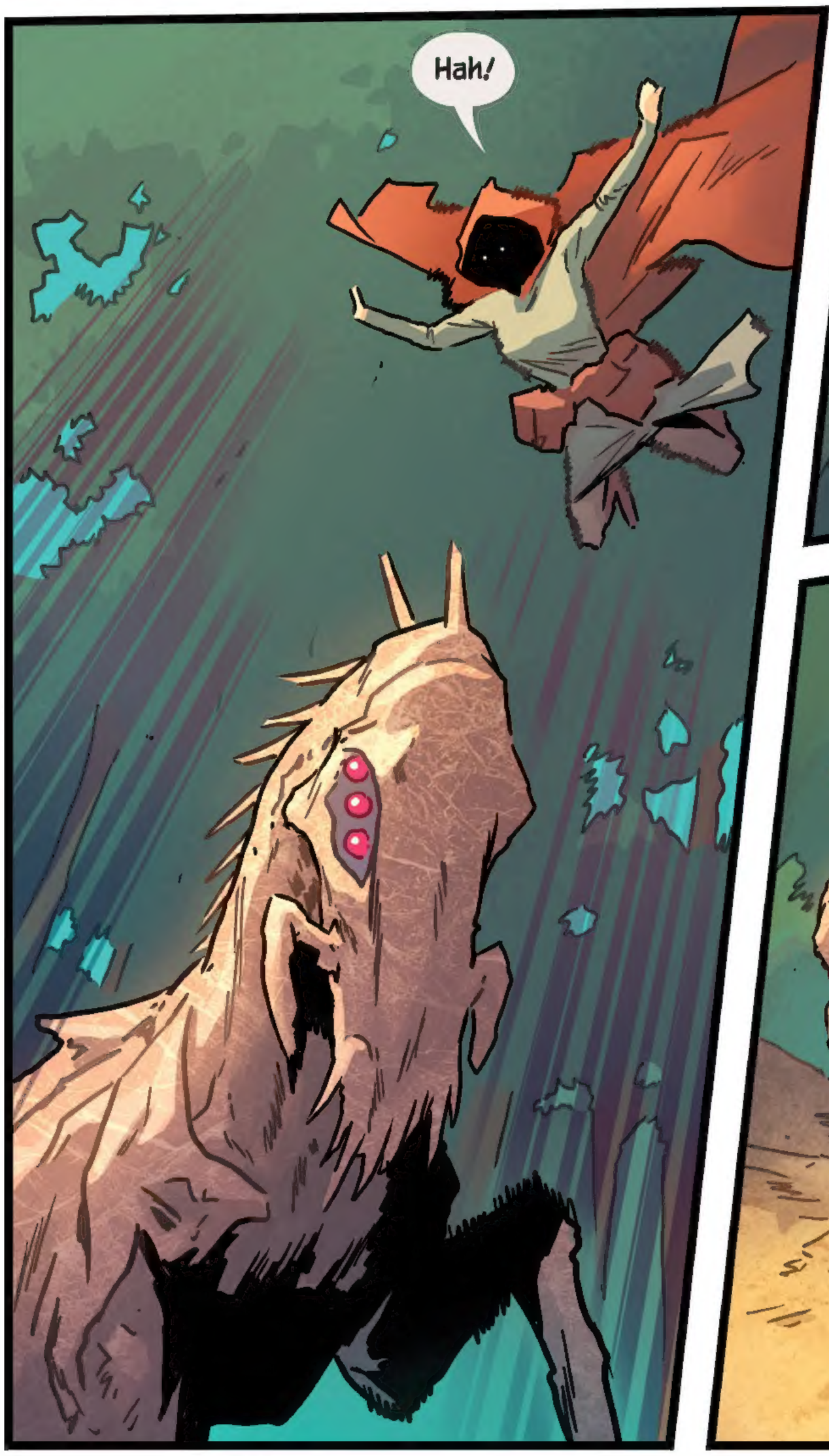
S-stay back! I've got friends!

Actually, that's why I'm here. I--

HELP! HELP!

Every time. I just wanted to help you find your--


--Slep.

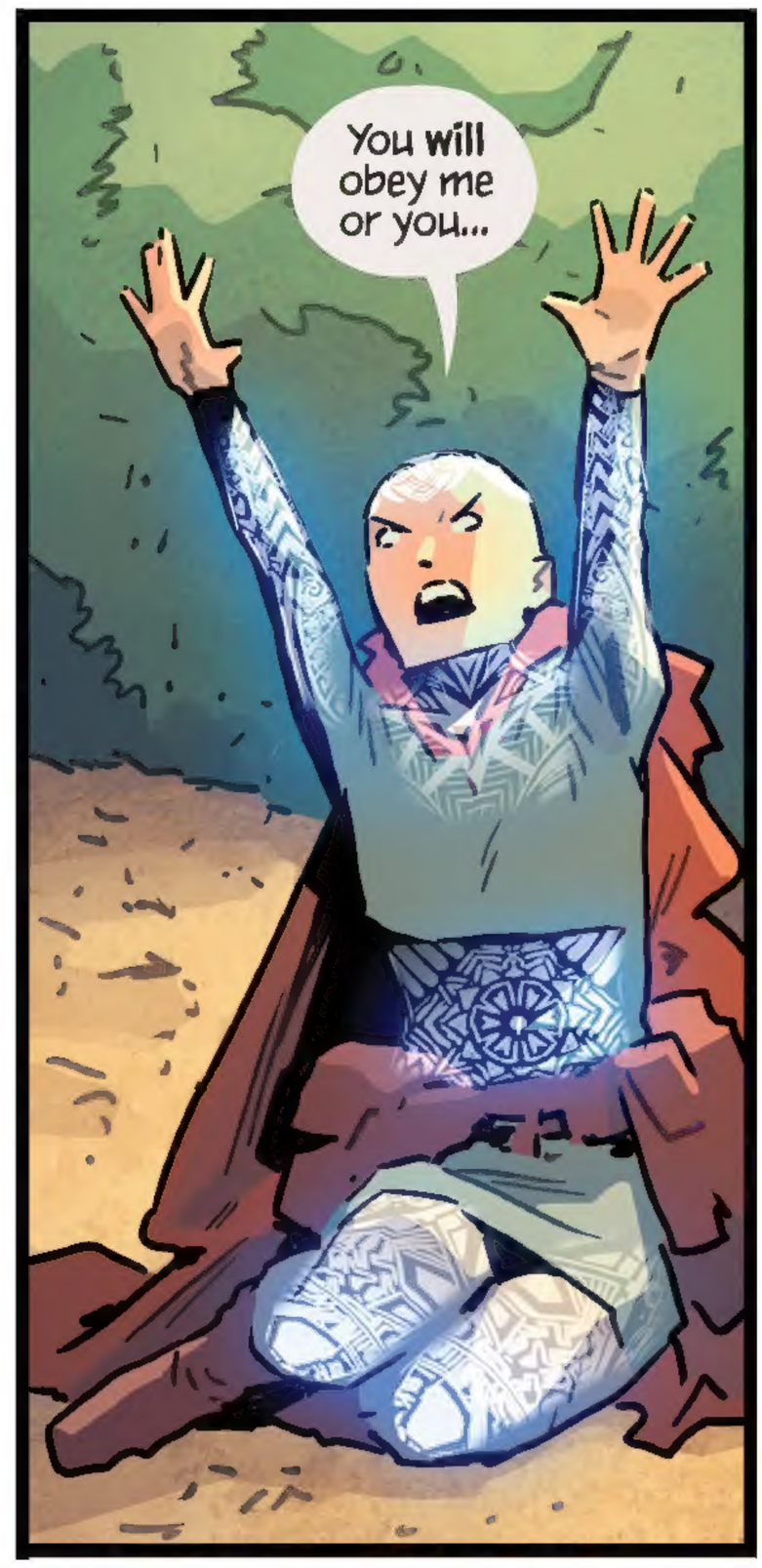

Hah!

Easy, Mala--you don't want to make it--

--Maaaaad.

Damn you.

So, ow.


You will obey me or you...

You, uh...good slep?

Gods, I hate sleps. So...

Who are you?
You first.

I tried to tell your friend that I'm--
STRAYER!

You are doing quite a fine job of protecting me.

I hadn't imagined you'd be dumb enough to try and ride a slep that hadn't been scented on you.
Which, I admit, was **my mistake.**

I am not good with animals.
Enough.
That's amazing, as you are so very wonderful with **people.**

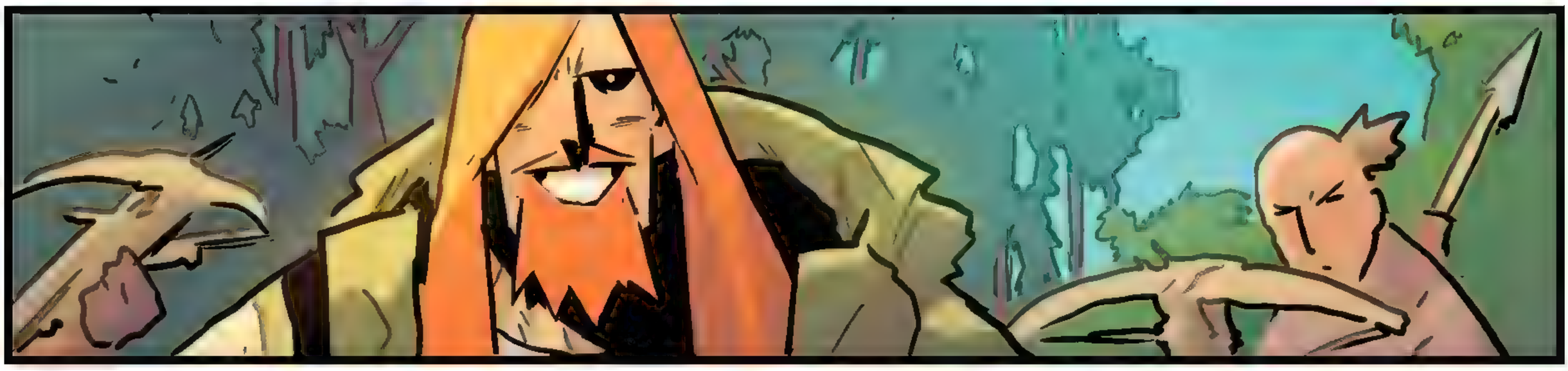
You will get **nothing** from us. You want money, we have none.
Do you think we're **bandits?**

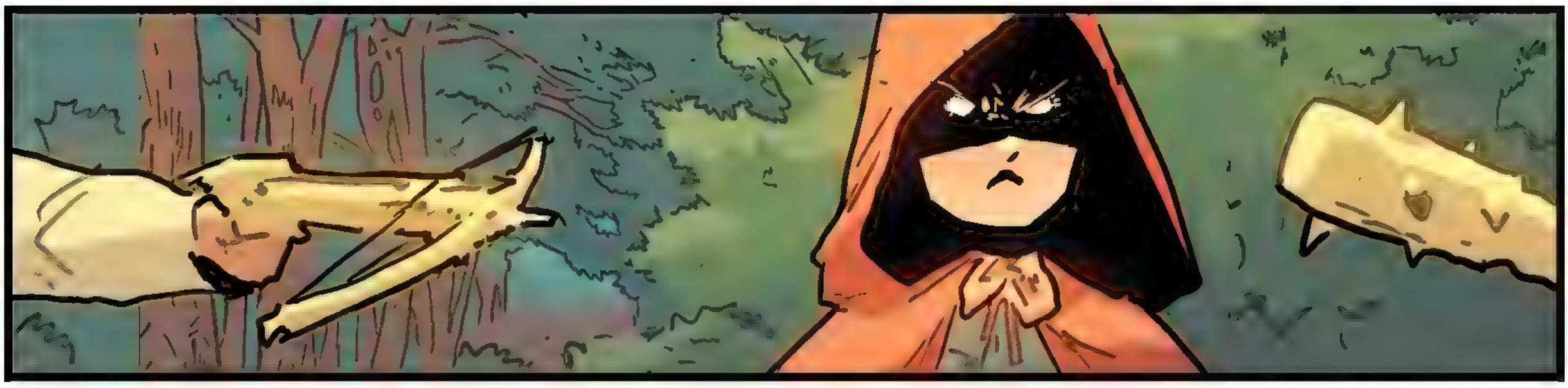
Yes?
We're **caravaners.**

In that case, we **definitely** have money.
STRAYER.
Provided, of course, you have the means to get us to Laland.

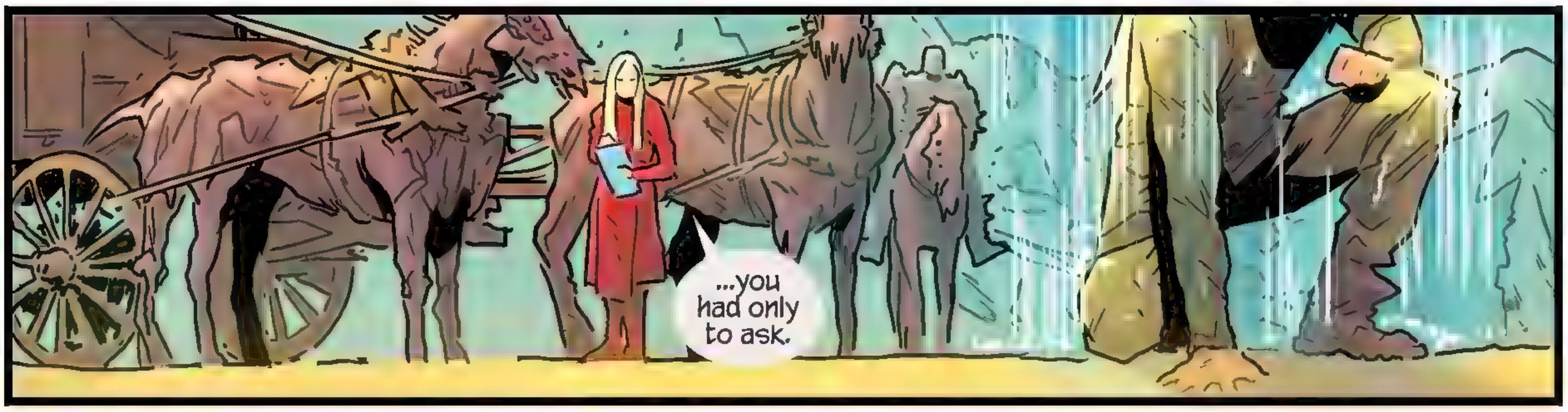
Yes...

...I believe we have the **means.**





Now if only it would rain...
Hrmmm.
You know...

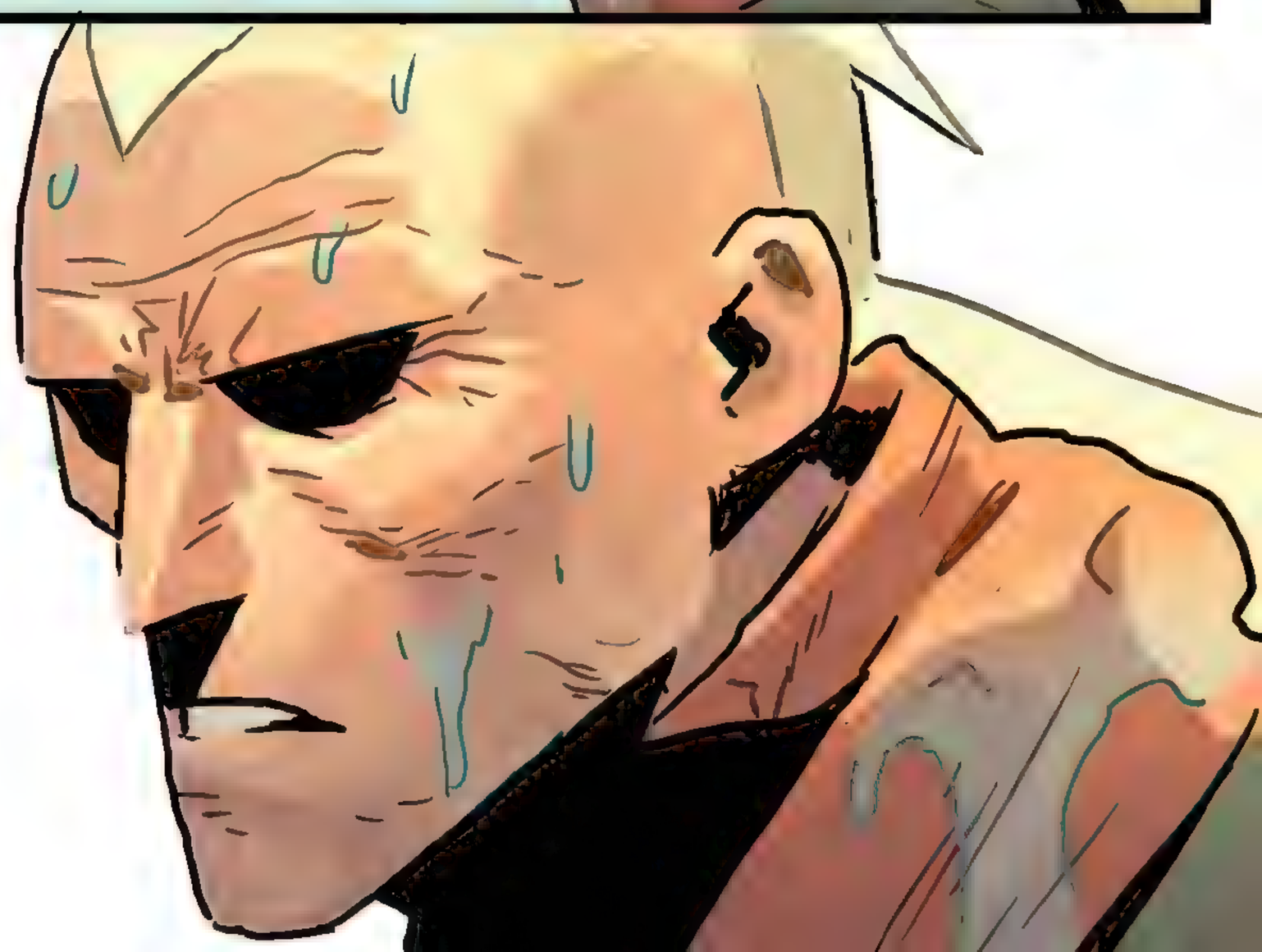

...you had only to ask.

Are you done?

Satisfied?
->sigh<-
No, not ever. What do you **want**, Sysad? I have crops to grow.

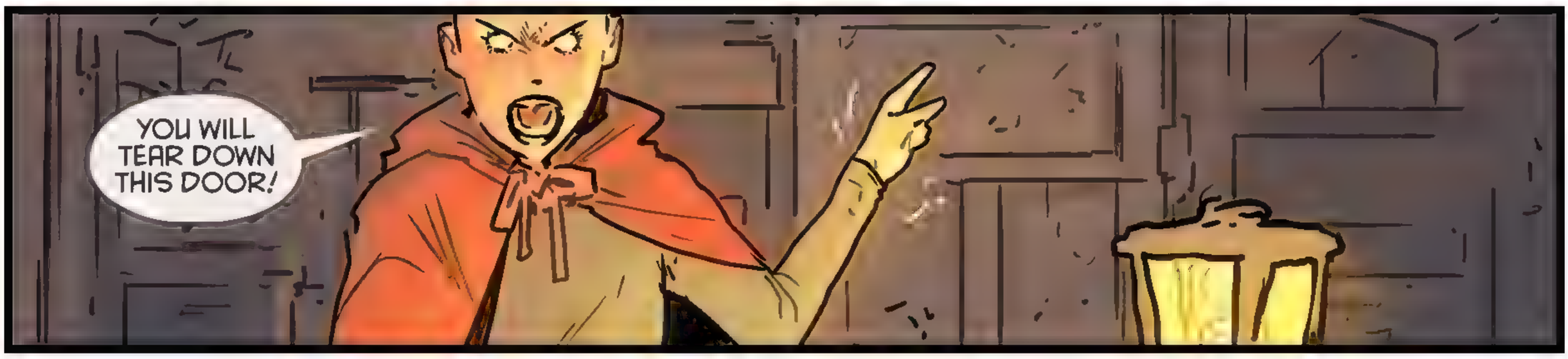
Or **not**, apparently.

I am here about the so-called **Archemancers.**


There **aren't** any Archemancers.

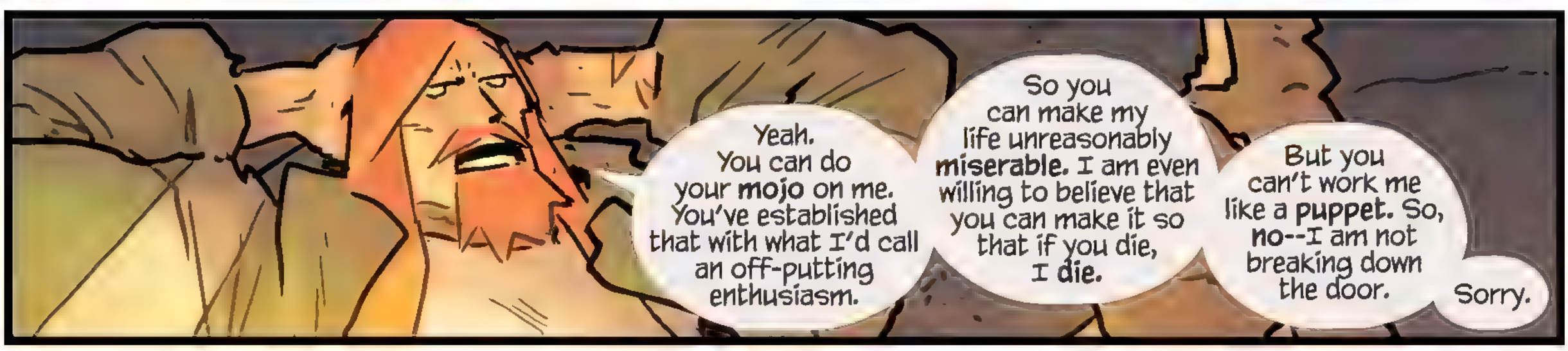
Not anymore.
That is not true, High Arbiter.
I take it that my retirement has come to an **end**, then.
More of an **intermission.** The Church of the Grammar and The Emergent himself gave you a task. They simply wish you to complete it.
Wish or **demand?**
You know as well as I do...
...those are one and the same.

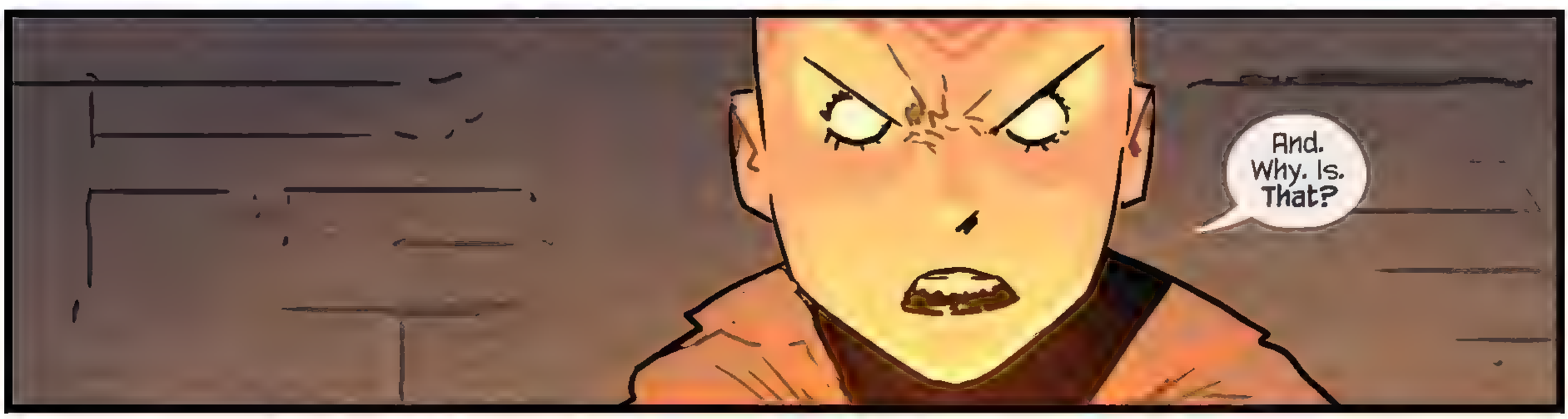
YOU WILL DO THIS FOR ME, STRAYER!

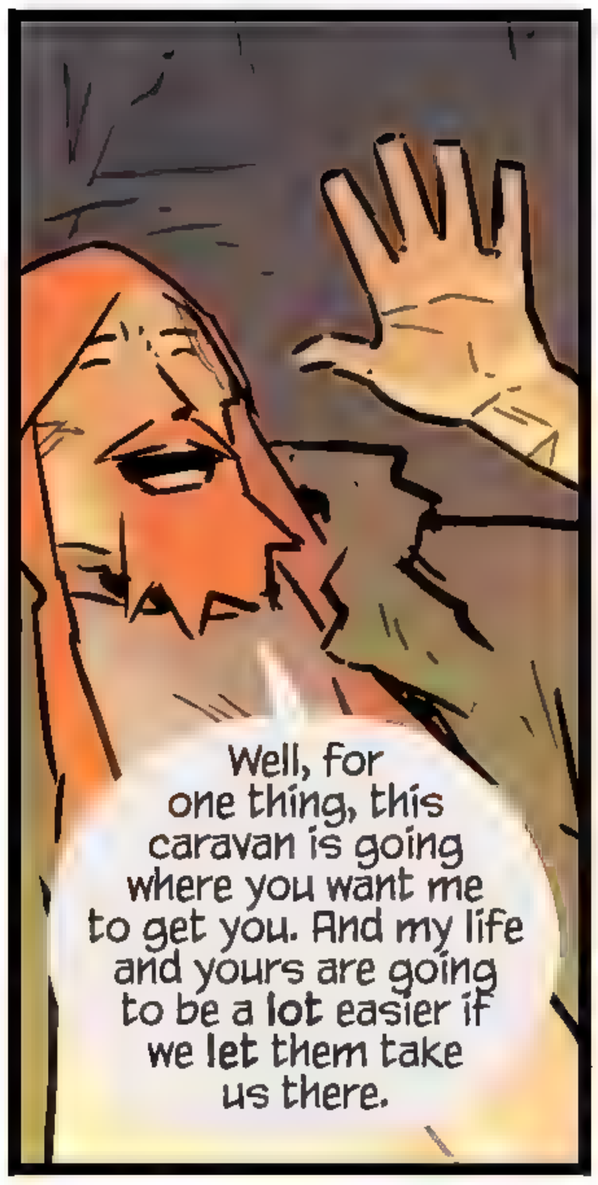

YOU WILL TEAR DOWN THIS DOOR!

Or?

Or?
OR?
Or, I will--

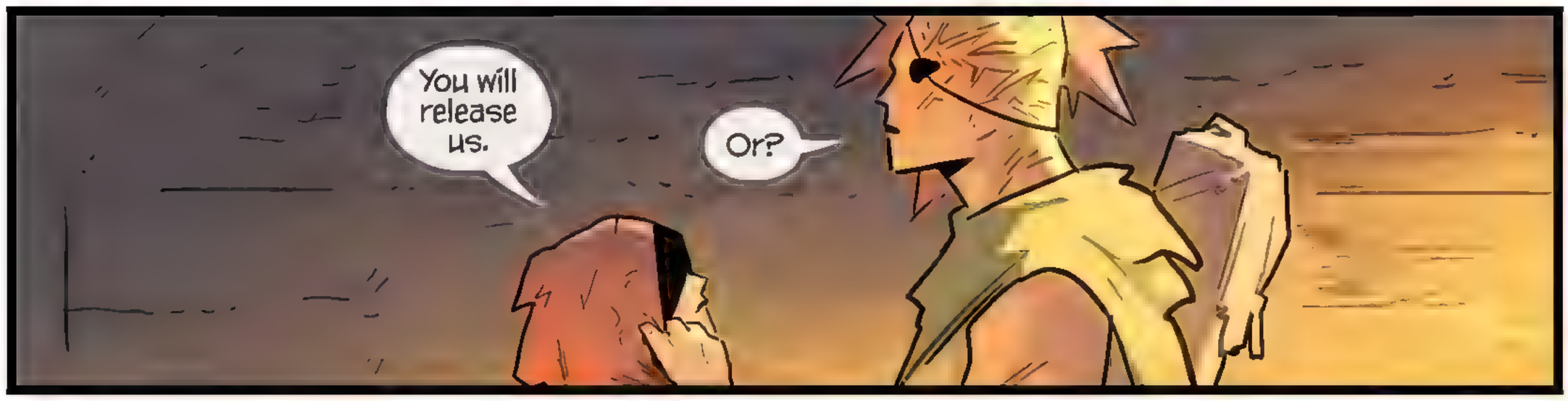

Yeah. You can do your **mojo** on me. You've established that with what I'd call an off-putting enthusiasm.
So you can make my life unreasonably **miserable.** I am even willing to believe that you can make it so that if you die, I **die.**
But you can't work me like a **puppet.** So, **no**--I am not breaking down the door.
Sorry.


And. Why. Is. That?


Well, for one thing, this caravan is going where you want me to get you. And my life and yours are going to be a **lot** easier if we **let** them take us there.

And why would they do that?
Yes--

--I'd like to know the answer to that myself.


You will release us.
Or?

Oh, she really hates that question.

Yes, I heard. The whole caravan heard. Quite possibly the whole **Edgelands** heard. Which does not make the prospect of weeks of travel with you very appealing.
So what is it that's going to make us take you on?
Aside from my undeniable **charm?** Well, mostly...
...what happens next.

Delis, we have a--

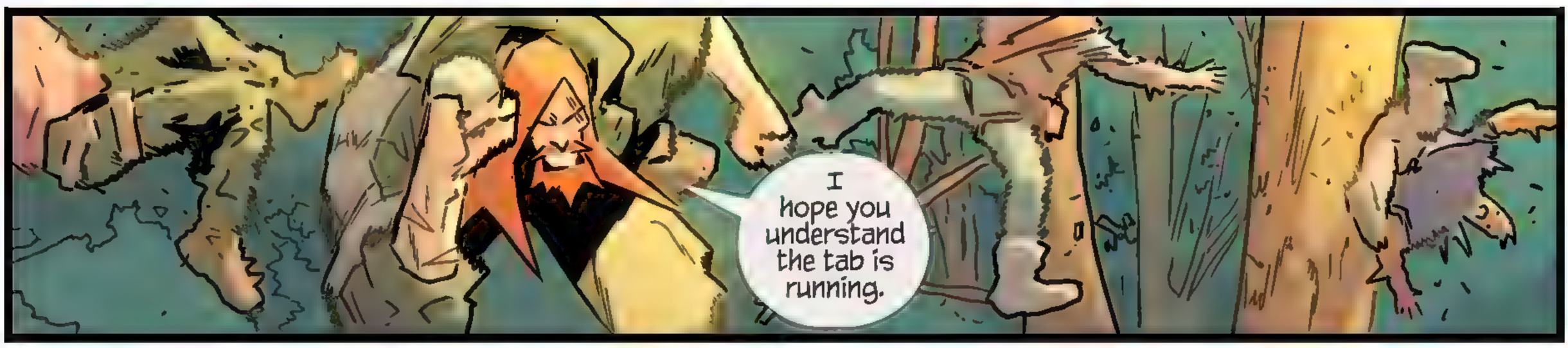
--problemmm.
You--
Not me--**them.** And no, this isn't some kind of trap.
We'll see.

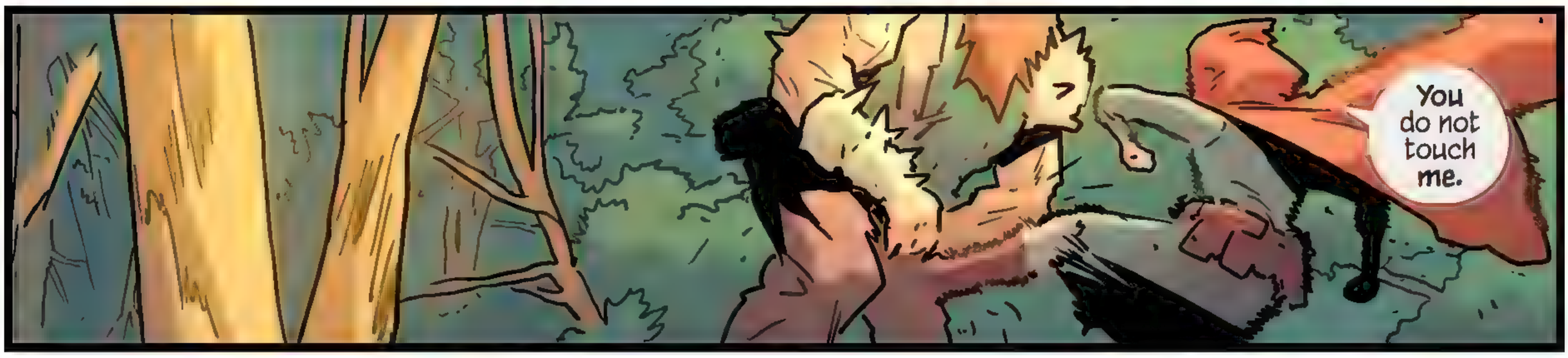
Should I even bother telling you to stay inside?
I will not.
Try not to die, then.

If you're going to fight, fight!

Damn.

Nice shot.
Impossible.
Yeah...
...I get that a lot.
You--
Damn it.





I get that one a lot, too. That happens to be true, but I don't feel I should get the blame.

You don't understand what's here. We didn't **want** to fight you.

Then why did you?

Because of...

AGAGGGHHH

Ah...

...KASHAS.
TO BE CONTINUED...

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AFTERSHOCK™

21 QUESTIONS

with Editor-in-Chief
MIKE MARTS

and InSEXts writer
MARGUERITE BENNETT

1

MIKE MARTS: *Spot the moment you knew you wanted to be a comic book writer...*

MARGUERITE BENNETT: I knew I wanted to write words and dialogue that went over pictures all the way back to when I was a tiny child. In the head of a tiny child, though, that means children's books. As a proper comic book writer, I suppose I was seventeen, though I believed it was as much of a pipe dream as being an astronaut. Or, screw it, a unicorn. I was pretty thoroughly gatekept out of comics as a teenager and college student. I didn't genuinely think I could do this—let alone that I might be good at it, honestly—until Scott Snyder kept me after class and straight up told me I could.

2

Who's the mentor who knows they're your mentor, and who's the mentor that doesn't know?

The mentor who knows is Scott Snyder. The mentor who doesn't is you. (Whoops. Fuck. I spoiled it.)

3

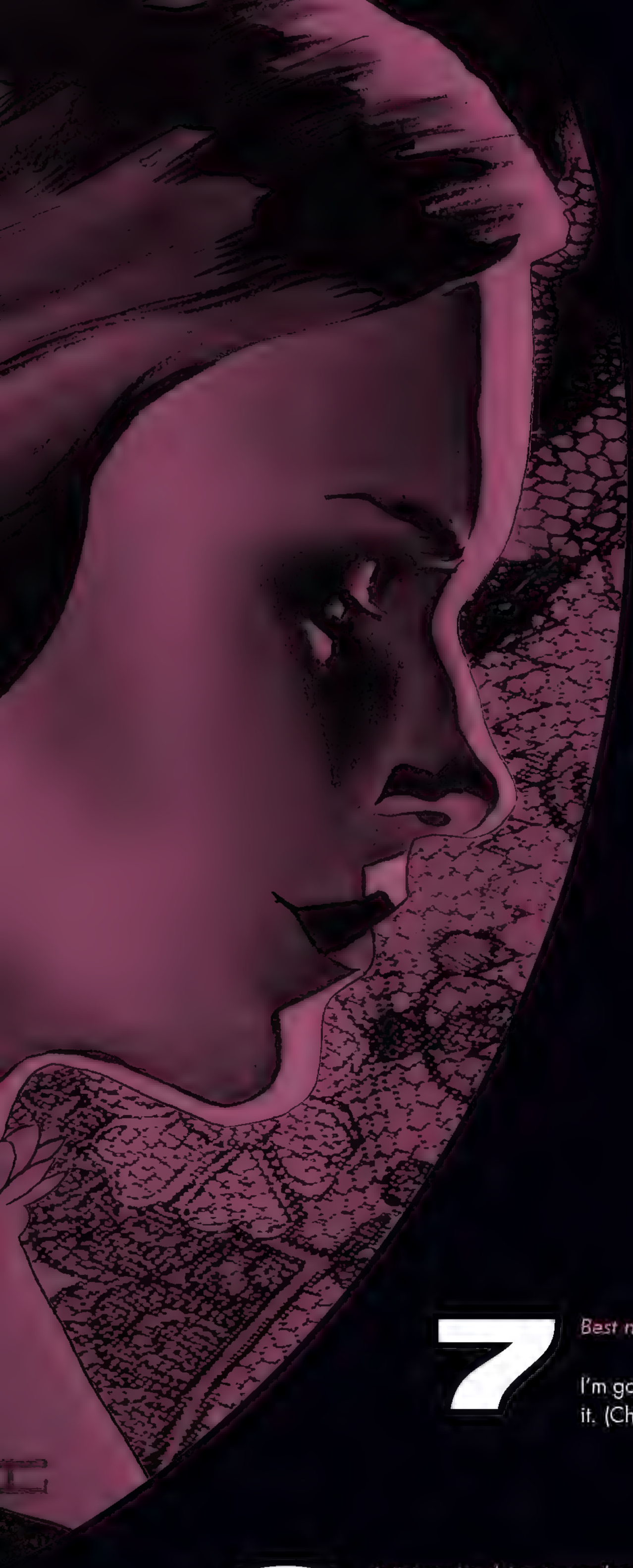
Movie that should have been a comic first but wasn't.

I'm actually going to go with the HARRY POTTER books because I am wildly selfish and always need more Harry Potter in my life. Would've been a wonderful way to introduce young readers to the medium, and movies could always come after.

4

Comic that should have become a movie but didn't.

NECROPOLIS, by Jake Wyatt, done in stop motion Harry Selick animation a la CORALINE. That would be something chilling and dazzling to see.



5

Do you listen to music while writing?

Oh, God, yes. I'm a junkie for movie and video game soundtracks. So many superheroine fight scenes are going to be written to the new THE FORCE AWAKENS soundtracks, you don't even know. INSEXTS was largely written to Dario Marianelli and Rammstein, incidentally.

6

Best moment of career that's happened so far...

The night Scott asked me to write BATMAN with him. He pulled me aside after one of the evening classes, my second year of grad school. It was January, with snow on the ground, and it was so, so cold and so, so dark. On the drive home, I had to pull over onto the side of the road and screw up my eyes and stare at the ceiling to keep myself from crying. I just thought over and over, "I'm saved, I'm saved. Thank you, whatever's out there, for the gift of my life." Everything started that night. I have never been so grateful.

7

Best moment of career that hasn't happened yet...

I'm gonna get a kiss from Emi Lenox if I can manage it. (Cheeks kisses are also acceptable.)

8

Artist you're dying to work with.

Sean Gordon Murphy. We've been joking about an S&M gangster comic for a long time. One day I'm going to collect and we're both going to be wanted in twelve states.

9

If you could only co-write for the rest of your career, who would be your partner?

Kieron Gillen. He's kind, funny, generous, gentle, and talented as all goddamn get-out. He has minded me when I was new and awkward, he has celebrated with me in my best triumphs, and he has been with me during my darkest tempers. He listens when you talk story. He always finds something to improve upon, and is always supportive when you're passionate about something in turn.

10

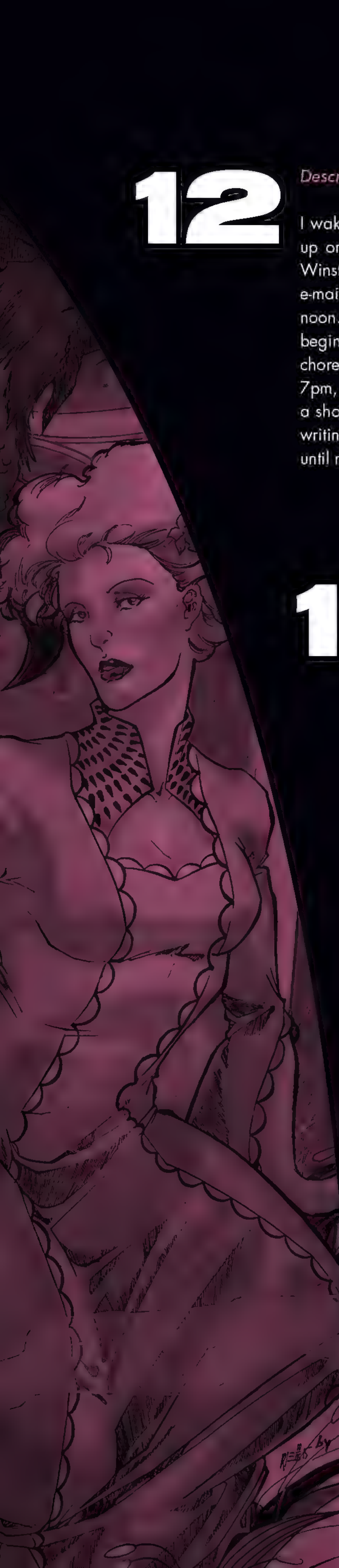
Favorite creation of yours.

INSEXTS, haha! Though if I can't say INSEXTS, I'm mighty proud of the work I've done on BOMBSHELLS. One of the vexing things about most team stories, but superhero stories in general, is the minimal number of women. If you have a team of six dudes and one woman, that one woman suddenly has to bear the burden or validating and representing the experiences of all women, which is impossible, and also dumb. Only thing dumber is how the woman is often then cut to avoid controversy, criticism, and scrutiny. I write mostly women (something I genuinely never thought I'd do) and it allows me to get at different elements of different experiences, which creates, I hope, a richer and more complex art for readers.

11

Describe your workplace.

I live in a beautiful house with Noelle Stevenson, and we call our home Galhalla. It's a pert, charming, hundred-year-old, whitewashed house in Los Angeles, with high, pale ceilings covered in bookcases, a bright and airy living room, a shining and dark dining room table, an opulent liquor cabinet, a cozy kitchen, and a perfect backyard for parties. I cycle through all of these over the course of a week. I write certain projects sitting at the dining room table; I write certain projects in my bathrobe, lying in bed like a queen under a pile of furs, quilts, and sheepskins. I can't work in the same place; my mind needs different sorts of stimulation for each scene and book.



12

Describe your typical day of writing.

I wake up at 5am to look over art from artists in time zones and catch up on any fires, social media, or other crises. At 6am, I usually walk Winston, our terrier/Schnauzer mix, and at 6:45am, answer East Coast e-mails. At 8am, I begin writing for East Coast, which runs until about noon. Then I break for lunch and clean the house. Around 1:30pm, I begin writing for West Coast until about 4pm, when I'll run errands, do chores, or else nap and recharge for the evening's work. At 6pm or 7pm, I'll have dinner (or decompress) with Noelle. I'll clean up and have a shower. At 8:30pm, I finish up work for West Coast and begin prose writing for myself, until about 10:30pm. Curl up in bed at 11pm and read until midnight (sometimes comics, sometimes prose).

13

I've seen you get into the "writing zone". Describe that.

Ha! It's a sight. For a lot of things, I start with an emotion or image that resonates with me, and retro-engineer a story to convey it. I ask what the worst thing is that could happen to get us there, what the best thing might be. From there come characters who could carry the message and power of those images or emotions, and then it's essentially LARPing through the house, trying to live my day-to-day life as them until I feel like I have their voices, desires, fears, and flaws down. It's a very silly process.

14

World's about to end and you can pick one comic character, one fellow creator and one Hollywood type to pal around with as the "last people on Earth". Go.

I'm gonna say Sandor Clegane, aka The Hound, from GAME OF THRONES (technically a comic!). I want to spent my final days protected from zombies and able to annoy someone who could bend me into a pretzel but won't because he's broken and lonely, I guess? For creator, James Tynion. He's my (6 weeks younger) older brother and he's been with me since the very beginning. I see him every week, text him most every day, and talk to him about every story and major project I embark on. We're siblings, the Snyder children, making it off on our own. He's brilliant, loyal, ambitious, generous, and caring. I'll always go to bat for him and I couldn't imagine life without him.

15

Last good book you read was...

DARK PLACES, Gillian Flynn (the author of GONE GIRL)'s second novel. I love mean, confident, capable female protagonists, especially if they are unlikeable, cunning, and have their shit together. I like women who don't have to learn lessons, and I love books where I have no idea what it going to happen, even up to the very last pages.

16

The title to the comic about you would be called...

Handmaiden. It would be a very sharp memoir, running from the South I grew up in to the industry I love, about how young women in the workforce, social circles, and home life are used (particularly as that we are valued as supporting characters, help-meets, and, frankly, handmaidens for the work, art, and attentions of older men). It would be very fun, witty, and scandalous, but it would be very mean.

17

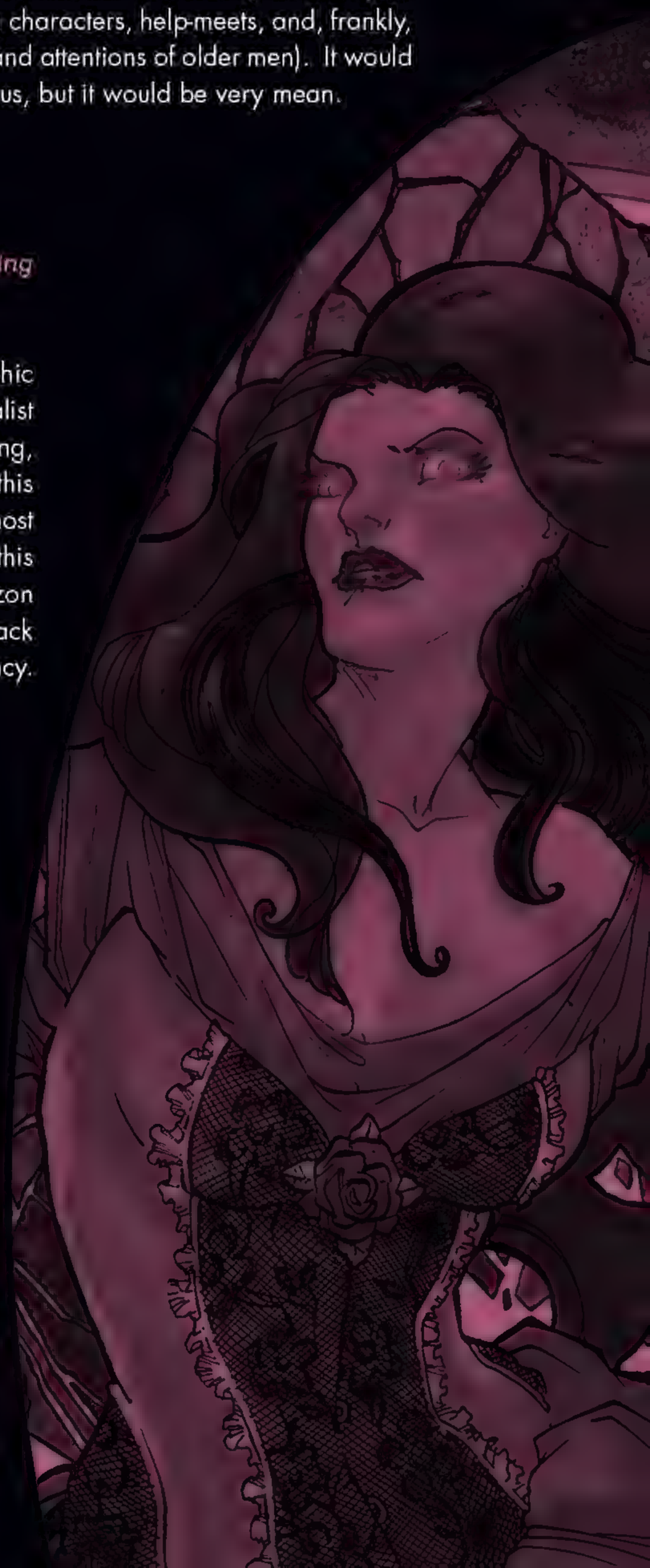
Best comic that everyone might not be reading yet but should be...

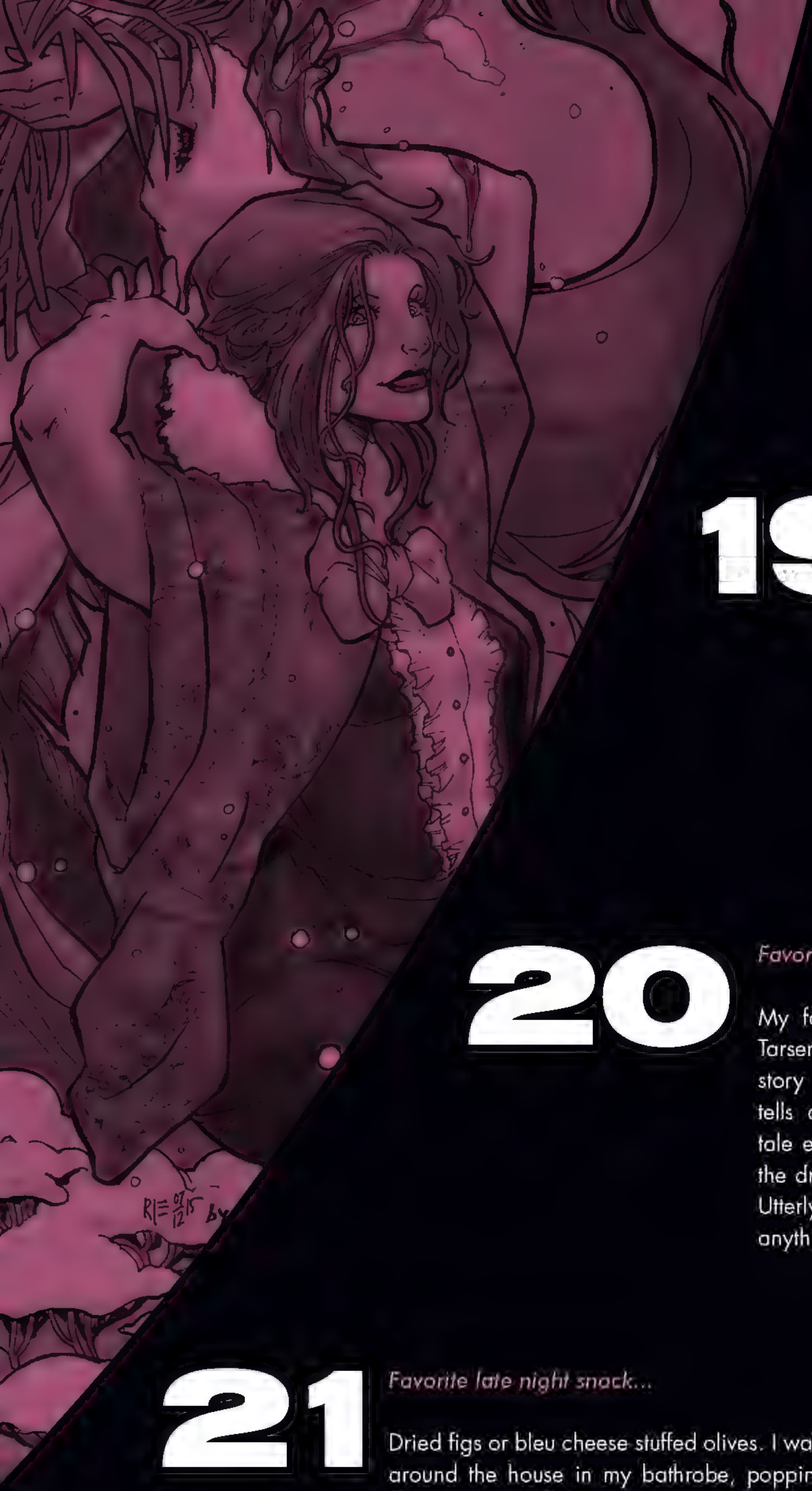
The People Inside, by Ray Fawkes. That graphic novel absolutely cut my throat. Intense, formalist approach to love, loss, grief, joy, healing, and the passage of time. Honestly, forget this garbage about my process! That book is the most important thing you could take away from this interview, haha. I'm not kidding. Go on Amazon and buy it before you forget. You close the back cover with the most fantastic sense of poignancy.

18

Why AfterShock?

The absolute creative freedom, the fantastic support and encouragement, the many reminders that our stories and energy and endeavors are appreciated, the ease and accessibility of every voice at the company, the chances to work with artists I adore who I know are valued and protected, and teams across the board that I trust. I know I will work with Aftershock for a long while and I am incredibly happy about that.





19

Favorite actor...

I'd say Donald Sutherland. He's very smart, very soothing, very dapper, and I imagine he'd have some wonderful stories. I could listen to his voice for ages. I listen to his reading of *"The Old Man and the Sea"* with regularity. He means a lot to me as a muse and he plays such phenomenal villains.

20

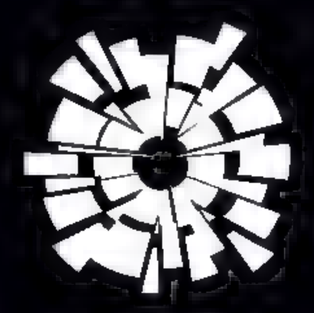
Favorite movie...

My favorite movie THE FALL by Tarsem Singh. Gorgeous, brutal story of a 1920s stuntman who tells a little migrant girl a fairy tale epic to convince her to steal the drugs he needs to kill himself. Utterly beautiful and unlike anything I've ever seen.

21

Favorite late night snack...

Dried figs or bleu cheese stuffed olives. I walk around the house in my bathrobe, popping them in my mouth like candy, muttering about plot points to myself.



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WITH ARTWORK BY **PAT OLLIFFE**

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DAVID HINE · ALBERTO PONTICELLI
SUPER ZERO #3
AMANDA CONNER · JIMMY PALMIOTTI
FEB 17
TAMRA BONVILLAIN · RACH
FEB 10
Dreaming Eagles #3
GARTH ENNIS · SIMON COLEBY
INSEXTS #3
MARGUERITE BENNETT · ARIELA KRISTANTINA
FEB 10
FEB 24
REPLICA #3
PAUL JENKINS · ANDY CLARKE
JOHN KALISZ
ROB STEEN
FEB 03

ABOUT THE CREATORS OF

STRAYER™

JUSTIN JORDAN writer

@Justin_Jordan

Justin Jordan broke into comics with *The Strange Talent of Luther Strode* with Tradd Moore at Image. Since then, he's written two more *Strode* series for Image, as well as *Dead Body Road* with Matteo Scalera and *Spread* with Kyle Strahm. He's recently written the creator-owned series *Deep State* and *John Flood* for BOOM! He rebooted *Shadowman* for Valiant and *Team 7* for DC's New 52. His other works have included *The Adventures of Superman, Deathstroke, Superboy* and, most recently, a two-year run on *Green Lantern: New Guardians*. He lives in very rural Pennsylvania with a cat named Tom Waits. Who is a girl. And adorable.

JUAN GEDEON artist

@juan_gedeon

Juan Gedeon was born in Argentina in 1987. He started doing storyboards, illustrations and animatics at age 18. After that, he did countless comic pitches for independent writers that never got picked up. Juan lived in Mexico for four years where he produced storyboards and layouts for an animated movie. After chomping at the bit for almost ten years, he drew *Ghost Racers* for Marvel Comics in 2015.

TAMRA BONVILLAIN colorist

@TBonvillain

Tamra Bonvillain graduated from the Joe Kubert School in 2009. For the next four years, she worked at Spiderwebart for Greg Hildbrandt and Jean Scrocco doing design work, retouching paintings, cleaning/scanning drawings, and other various tasks. While there she began coloring in her off hours, eventually moving back near her hometown to pursue coloring full time. She is currently coloring *Strayer, Rat Queens, Wayward, Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur, John Flood*, and more.

RACHEL DEERING letterer

@racheldeering

Rachel Deering is an Eisner and Harvey award-nominated writer, editor, and letterer. She has worked in some capacity for nearly every publisher in the industry, but is perhaps best known for her efforts on the massive horror anthology, *In the Dark* and her writing in *Creepy*. She enjoys collecting arcade cabinets, monster masks, and vinyl records in her spare time.

SON OF ULTRON